

Today's News - Wednesday, October 27, 2010

- Farrelly minces no words (but with great humor!) about what she thinks about the state of "design" (square toilets and houses customized to DNA included): it now seems to mean "'all form no content' or 'really really pretentious and silly' or just 'downright unusable'...Only on the rarest occasions is the word 'designer' used to mean 'supremely well suited to purpose.'"
- In New Zealand, Wellington Airport's "edgy" new building (a.k.a. The Rock) "smashes pumpkin reputation": it seems people do like it after all.
- King cheers the rebirth of a San Francisco alley that balances traffic and pedestrians: "All it took was five years, bureaucratic contortions and determination."
- In L.A., (fer) Studio's proposal to bring "a once bustling and elegant" thoroughfare back to life faces a bad economy, government indecision, and a wary public.
- Boston wins EPA grant to redo the widely criticized City Hall Plaza, "a strong signal" that demolition of the Brutalist City Hall building is now "off the table" (disappointing some, good news to others).
- Kamin gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Chicago's newest Apple store: it may be "less than original, but still upgrades the cityscape."
- Bernstein on plans to revamp the 100 11th Avenue lobby: though they say they're "channeling Nouvel," the architect "does not want to be channeled. 'What I designed was very precise...It's not respectful.'"
- Brisac Gonzalez's plan for the Museum of Copenhagen in a former 17th Century brewery includes "interventions designed to be undoable."
- An interesting profile of Terry Farrell, "the man with the master plan": despite having designed "a few of the most unpopular buildings in London...he has become a sensitive thinker" about the city, and uses "his high profile to provoke debate and initiate projects."
- Gould cheers an "anti-McMansion" in Racine, WI: it's "a bold, colorful - and LEED Platinum-rated - modernist box" that doesn't raise "the ire of local preservationists."
- Meanwhile, remember that billion-dollar home in Mumbai? Some are "proud" of its ostentatious-ness, while "others see it as shameful in a nation where many children go hungry" (slide show may color your opinion).
- The American University of Beirut launches Landscape Architecture as new profession in the country and region.
- Eyefuls of The Earth Awards 2010 winners - a very interesting (and promising) mix! + The winner in Social Justice category "represents a shift in emphasis among some architects"; says the Norwegian architect, design "can change people's lives...if architects and other experts just lower their fees."

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Design fails to think outside the square: Have you noticed that "designer", once a noun, is now an adjective? It translates, roughly, as "all form no content" or "really really pretentious and silly" or just "downright unusable"...Only on the rarest (and most rarefied) occasions is the word "designer" used to mean "supremely well suited to purpose" By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

Wellington Airport terminal smashes pumpkin reputation: Dubbed "The Rock" and likened to a pair of pumpkins because of its shape and copper plating, the new terminal is the final stage of a \$60 million development...the "edgy" new building...was criticised by architects when plans were first unveiled, feedback had so far been positive... -- Studio Pacific Architecture [images, video]- The Dominion Post / Stuff (New Zealand)

Linden Alley planners in S.F. went extra mile: In a city that pays endless lip service to street life, this 100-foot-long strip...shows that lasting design can resonate, striking an attractive balance between those of us in automobiles and those of us on foot...All it took was five years, bureaucratic contortions and determination...shows how difficult it is to transfer planning theory to real life. By John King -- David Winslow; Sagan Piechota Architecture [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

LA Main Street's Almost Alright: Inglewood's (fer) Studio proposes a redevelopment plan for once bustling Market Street...scheme would rehabilitate...a once bustling and elegant center currently overrun with vacant storefronts, abandoned theaters, and junky stores. By Sam Lubell [slide show]- The Architect's Newspaper

Boston's Problem Plaza to Get Green Makeover: EPA's design assistance grant will help sustainably redesign the widely criticized City Hall Plaza...one of five winners of Environmental Protection Agency's new Greening America's Capitals program...Although many have been hoping that the Brutalist City Hall building might one day be demolished, this project is a strong signal that the idea is off the table. - The Architect's Newspaper

Apple tweaks its cookie-cutter; new store in Chicago is less than original, but still upgrades the cityscape...largely reveals how architects can tailor a prototype so it better suits its function and its surroundings. But next time around, Steve Jobs, try giving Chicago the original it deserves. By Blair Kamin -- Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Hoerr Schaudt landscape architects [images]- Chicago Tribune

Developers' Effort to Warm a Lobby Leaves Some Cold: ...after real estate agents attributed slow sales to 100 11th Avenue lobby's design..."We are channeling Nouvel." But Nouvel does not want to be channeled. "What I designed was very precise...It's not respectful." By Fred A. Bernstein -- Jean Nouvel; Jennifer Post [images]- New York Times

Brisac Gonzalez reveals scheme for Museum of Copenhagen: ...a new home in a former 17th Century brewery...has twice been ravaged by fire and the interiors have withstood many alterations...interventions are designed to be undoable...One the roles of the museum is to advise on matters concerning the preservation of the city's buildings. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Terry Farrell is the man with the master plan: ...as both an architect and urban designer has touched more areas of the city than anyone else working in the field today...in the past, [he] has authored a few of the most unpopular buildings in London...Despite these aberrations, he has become, late in his career, a sensitive thinker about London, and has used his high profile to provoke debate and initiate projects.- Evening Standard (UK)

The Anti-McMansion: In a striking lakefront residence [in Racine, Wisconsin], Johnsen Schmalig deftly blends modernism, sustainability, and modesty...created a bold, colorful - and LEED Platinum-rated - modernist box without raising the ire of local preservationists. By Whitney Gould [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Mumbai billionaire's home boasts 27 floors, ocean and slum views: Mukesh Ambani is at the top of the growing list of billionaires in India, where some are proud of his ostentatious house while others see it as shameful in a nation where many children go hungry. -- Perkins+Will; Hirsch Bedner [slide show]- Los Angeles Times

AUB launches Landscape Architecture as new profession in Lebanon and Arab World: The Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management at the American University of Beirut launched the first initiative...to formalize the profession as a new and independent profession. -- Lebanese Association of Landscape Architecture; International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)- AME Info (United Arab Emirates)

The Earth Awards 2010 winners: A Global Search for Sustainable Innovations Designed for the 21st Century in Built Environment, Social Justice, Product, etc. -- Michael Ramage, University of Cambridge/Peter Rich Architects/John Ochsendorf, MIT; Biomimicry Institute; Andreas Gjertsen/Yashar Hanstad/TYIN Tegnestue; etc. [links to info, images]- The Earth Awards

'Butterfly Houses' showcase the caring face of architecture: ...a sustainable community project that will give 50 Thai orphans

their own individual homes...represents a shift in emphasis among some architects..."We have searched for a deeper meaning in our profession, and find it in building projects for people that really benefit from improved physical surroundings...There are thousands of projects that can change people's lives and literally millions of clients, if architects and other experts just lower their fees." -- Andreas G. Gertsen/Tyin Tegnesteue; Architecture for Humanity [images]- CNN

Book Review: "The Architecture of Patterns" by Paul Andersen and David Salomon...considers how the Modernist adage "form follows function" has stuck around in a whole new guise. By Ann Lui [images]- ArchNewsNow



BIG: 8 House, Copenhagen, Denmark: "... a three-dimensional neighborhood rather than an architectural object." -- Bjarke Ingels Group

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